BA-0054/001(10)

Ałkın·ixɛxnım, The Devourer of Meat Which He Does Not Kill, that is, The Biting Scavenger; and Eagle, Asaikaiyutsmɑxnım, The Constant Eater, that is, The One Who Eats Before He Is Hungry. Next morning the flesh has been devoured and the hunter believes his guests have eaten it. Animals and birds, being supernatural, can hear the words of mortals and read their thoughts. The significance of these actions is that animals have the power to conceal themselves, so a hunter must gain their favour before he can hope to succeed. Belief in the efficacy of such customs as these is rapidly falling into decay and bear meat is now often eaten, but the skull is carefully placed in an evergreen tree near where the animal was slain, so that it may come back to life.

Fish, likewise are immortal. In autumn the streams are choked with dead and dying salmon, but the Bella Coola know that they are not really dead, they have merely shed their worthless blankets in accordance with Ałquntam's decrees. At that season of the year he causes the rivers to rise so that they will sweep away these useless and outworn cloaks. ¶ Although the salmon, from the kindness of their hearts, allow human beings to feast on their blankets, yet they have certain likes and dislikes which are carefully observed. From the time the first spring salmon appear[1] until the rising of the July moon women are not allowed to eat them or to go near the river. Men may eat the flesh, but instead of throwing the bones to dogs, they carefully return them to the river saying: ¶ "Please come back tomorrow". ¶ If this is inconvenient, bones can be thrown into the woods with impunity. ¶ Salmon, like men and animals, live a human-like existance in their homes far beneath the surface of the ocean. They lack and desire earthly objects, especially pounded cedar-bark (see Appendix A) to use as sponges for their children, so the Bella Coola throw pieces of it and eagle down on the water.

Before leaving the subject of supernatural animals, a word must be said concerning the attitude of the Bella Coola to those in whose forms their first ancestors came to earth. If for example, a man's first

1. See Chapter X.

ancestor ~~came to this earth~~ descended as a raven, this knowledge is ~~an immaterial, though~~ a ~~the less~~ valuable, but possession of himself and his family. Indeed, the most treasured possessions of a Bella Coola are not the material objects collected by him through life, but the ~~immaterial possessions~~ intangible rights wrapped up in his ancestral history. These are referred to under four names:

(1) Smaiusta, "Preserved Story." The myth describing the coming to earth of a man's first ancestors in the beginning of time.

(2) K'ilta, "What was Sent Down". The names and other possessions given by Älquntäm to a man's first ancestors in the beginning of time.

(3) Txämätl, "Whence we Came." The place to which a man's first ancestors came in the beginning of time, and the one from which they have since spread.

(4) q̓wałtłnta.

Various smaiusta are recorded in Chapter VI, and the second and third terms are really part of the first, although ~~regarded by~~ to the Bella Coola, they are psychologically distinct. q̓wałtłnta is the word used for both the birds or animals chosen as clots by the first settlers, and also for creatures with which the early people came in contact as ~~ancestor, as it may be described at this point.~~ The nearest interpretation appears to be, "Crest." ~~"Memorial."~~ When a Bella Coola ~~thinks of~~ whose first ancestor came to earth as a raven ~~sees~~ that ~~this~~ bird, portrays it serves as a visible mark ~~he is reminded~~ of his intangible ~~immaterial~~ possession. In former days, if a man carved on stone so that his work and his name would never be forgotten, it was a q̓wałtłnkm, ~~and served as~~ a constant reminder of his greatness to generations there unborn. A q̓wałtłnta, therefore, combines the concept of memorial with that of crest, so that Bella Coola ~~acquainted with the thoughts of white men, refer to~~ speak of the White man's War Memorials as q̓wałtłnta. In brief, ~~the attitude of~~ a man regards ~~to~~ ~~him~~ the form assumed by his ancestor when coming to this earth, ~~is that the latter is an memorial to~~ as an emblem of the ancient history and fame of his family. It is a matter connected with the past, a matter of the mind, a source of pride to him to have such a possession, but a matter that does not affect his daily life.

So far as ~~the writer is aware~~ could be learnt, the Bella Coola ~~q̓wałtłnta~~ crests consist of the following birds and animals: Raven, Bald Eagle, Grizzly Bear, Black Bear, Wolf, Whale,

Black Fish, Merganser, Loon, Skämtsk, possibly Deer, and the mythical double-headed snake, ~~xxxxxx~~ Sisiutl. To these must be added the Sun, because some of the ~~first~~ original people came to earth in human form by ~~wending~~ sliding down his eye-lashes, the sun-beams; and nultnikta, the posts which stretched from earth to the land above ~~and~~ down which a number of the first ancestors of mankind swarmed in human form. The Bella Coola believe that these posts are particularly common memorials among the tribes of the outer coast. ~~According to Bella Coola belief.~~ According to some accounts it was these posts which supported the first sky until it fell.

~~Considering the fact that~~ a crest ~~[illegible]~~ is connected almost ~~entirely~~ exclusively with the distant past, ~~it is not surprising~~ ~~that~~ ~~that~~ a Bella Coola whose ancestor came to earth as ~~for example~~ a raven, pays no attention to the ravens of the present time. The ~~writer~~ matter ~~subject~~ was approached ~~this subject~~ from every possible angle and ~~was always informed that~~ ~~to~~ not the slightest signs of respect ~~was shown~~ ~~must be~~ toward living specimens of a man's ~~totem~~ crest could be noticed. A query as to whether a man refrained from eating his ~~totem~~ crest was regarded as ~~a~~ highly humourous. ~~question.~~ Nor is there ~~the slightest~~ any trace of fellowship between unrelated families even if they happen to have the same ~~totem~~ crest. The ~~writer kept returning to this subject,~~ subject was broached repeatedly, ~~and~~ until at last one ~~of his~~ informant smiled broadly, and said:

"I know now what you want to find out. I can tell you all about it."

He ~~proceeded to~~ recount how the Kitkatla are, ~~as he said~~ in his opinion, stupid enough to regard as brothers all those who have the same animal story even if they are members of different tribes. He said that when he was a young man, Indians from all parts of the coast used to meet at Victoria, and that a Kitkatla once ~~came to him inquiring~~ asked him what was his animal. ~~My informant~~ He was ~~at first somewhat~~ puzzled, but as the nearest answer to the question replied that ~~it~~ was the Raven, his ~~totem~~ crest. The Kitkatla was a Raven man, too, and, to ~~my informant's~~ the narrator's surprise, treated him as a brother for the rest of his stay in Victoria. He shook with laughter as he recalled the experience, and added that though he was quite willing to accept favours of this kind he would never dream of returning them. ~~To either [illegible] in stating~~ It can be stated unhesitatingly that the Bella Coola

have no totemic beliefs concerning their ~~kwaltcata~~ crests. There is not the slightest trace of respect towards the animal, nor yet of exogamy.

Although ~~kwaltcata~~ crests ~~cannot be described as~~ are not objects of religious veneration, ~~yet~~ yet they have some importance in the realm of social life. ~~The~~ Portrayal of one serves to indicate ownership of an ancestral myth describing that particular bird or animal. A wealthy chief is proud to display his ~~kwaltcata~~ crest on a totem-pole, or as ~~designs~~ a painting ~~ed~~ ~~ings~~ on the front wall of his house. Anyone seeing such a ~~design~~ portrayal is impressed with the glories of the family history of the owner, to the latter's gratification. ~~A living specimen of the bird or animal is treated with no respect, but its~~ Since delineation of an animal is a memento of family history. ~~For that reason~~ a man is often tatooed [1] with his ~~kwaltcata~~ crest, that derived from his father's first ancestor on the right breast, that from his mother, on the left; and the owner of a canoe ~~often~~ in many cases carves his ~~kwaltcata~~ crest on its bow. ~~for identification.~~ After the death of a chief a memorial-post is erected near his grave, decorated with a painting or carving of one or more ~~kwaltcata~~ crests, to remind observers ~~not only~~ of the deceased, ~~but~~ and of his family history, his most treasured possession. It is said, half jocularly, that a man grows to resemble his ~~kwaltcata~~ ancestral cloak; if, ~~for example,~~ one man's is the eagle, his hair turns white early, whereas that of another with raven ~~kwaltcata~~ long preserves its blackness. More definite, is the use, as a signal for attack, of a whistle imitating the cry of the leader's ~~kwaltcata~~ ~~crest~~ bird or animal. Finally, when a man whose ~~kwaltcata~~ crest is the raven hears one of these birds calling, he cries out:

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[1] ~~The Bella Coola say~~ It is said that tatooing was formerly customary ~~not only~~ among all the coastal tribes ~~but~~ and also the Carriers. ~~Both~~ Bella Coola men and women decorate themselves in this way, but the custom is not universal, and is said never to have been common. It is believed that Haida chiefs tatoo themselves in connection with potlatches; in Bella Coola this is not the case, although the operation is performed within the back-room of the patient's house. ~~Two methods are employed. The first is~~ It is done by puncturing the skin with a needle smeared with colouring material, ~~the second and~~ or less commonly by passing a string coated with the substance beneath the skin. The dye is obtained from river stones which are baked for a long time and then ground into a powder. This keeps indefinitely and can be made ready for use by mixing with water. As far as ~~the writer~~ could learn, it, any skilled craftsman ~~could~~ might perform the operation.

I don't know the meaning of that word, so let it pass.

have no totemic beliefs concerning their kwałtnta. There is not the slightest trace of respect towards the animal, nor yet of exogamy.

Never the less, kwałtnta have some slight importance without the realm of mythology. After a man's death, a memorial post is erected near his grave, and on this is painted or carved his kwałtnta. Sometimes two are shown, comprising the forms taken by both his father's and his mother's first ancestors. The background of meaning is that it serves to remind beholders of the deceased and also of his most treasured possession, his family history. It is said, half jocularly, that a man grows to resemble his kwałtnta; if, for example, one man's is the eagle, his hair turns white early, whereas that of another with raven kwałtnta long preserves its blackness. More definite, is the use, as a signal for attack, of a whistle imitating the cry of the leader's kwałtnta. Finally, when a man whose kwałtnta is the raven hears one of these birds calling, he cries out:

"Hello, kwałtntao, it is as you say."

This custom is probably due to a belief in the ability of ravens to bear news.

On the whole, it may be said that the attitude of the Bella Coola towards their living examples of kwałtnta does not differ from that of mingled respect and superiority with which they regard other birds and animals.

The Raven.

The beliefs of the Bella Coola concerning the Raven differ so fundamentally from those respecting other birds and animals, that the subject must be treated in a separate section. In the beginning of time, when Alquntam sent down the ancestors of the Bella Coola to this earth, he despatched Raven to be their guide and teacher. For this purpose he gave him enormous power, greater than that granted to any other man or animal. He came to earth in avian form, then changed to a man, but his cloak did not float back to the land above as did those of the other first comers to

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ST ~~earth. He had~~ It remained in the world below where he could ~~use~~ it ~~whenever he wished~~ at will. Äkuntïn ~~and~~ instructed him to travel to all parts of the world, ~~on a tour of~~ meaning the coast of British Columbia, in order to study the arts and crafts of the inhabitants and to bring back to Bella Coola those which seemed desirable. ~~This is shown on one of his~~ On these explorations he used to assume Raven form and set off in his canoe, Tsïnakl, which travelled without visible motive power at phenomenal speed. Owing to the power that Äkuntïn had given him, he could talk to the trees and the mountains, the birds, the animals, and the insects, as well as to the things he encountered on the coast.

~~XXXXX~~ Raven, perhaps made conceited by this power ~~given him~~, did not always use it for good purposes. ~~It is true that~~ He learnt many new inventions which he taught to the Bella Coola, but sometimes he ~~morally~~ indulged in adventures of an obscene nature. In fact, he was often too "smart." The Bella Coola relate ~~a large number of stories~~ many tales concerning ~~the~~ his exploits. ~~of Raven.~~ These are all mere stories, such as can be told by anyone, and they fall into two classes. One ~~of these~~ comprises humorous anecdotes, describing how Raven tried to show off, ~~and~~ to outwit other birds and animals, and his consequent discomfiture. ST ~~These belong to the realm of mythology and are recorded in~~ (Chapter ~~XIV~~ XV). ~~In addition, to these,~~ There are also stories describing the inventions and boons ~~has~~ obtained by Raven. ~~for the Bella Coola.~~ mankind. These are given in detail ~~in this section~~ here as the only satisfactory means of ~~bringing home to the reader~~ illustrating the attitude of the ~~readers~~ Bella Coola towards Raven.

The chief Raven, to whom Äkuntïn gave his power, is not regarded as a god, but essentially as a human being, with the kindly characteristics of a human being, and as a conceited individual who is always trying to display his power. The military [illegible] and [illegible] in [illegible], [illegible] is [illegible] / [illegible] / [illegible] /

birds, with ~~only~~ but the slightest trace of ~~the power once possessed by Howaklla~~ their ancestor's greatness. The Bella Coola know of the beliefs of the Nitinatla concerning ~~the~~ Raven, and say that in the north he is esteemed only ~~slightly~~ a little less than the supreme deity himself. But in Bella Coola the exploits of ~~the~~ Raven are always considered to be due to the power given him by Ïlquntïn, whose assistant he was, although he delighted to show his own prowess by outwitting his master.

~~The following (1) describes~~ The most spectacular of Raven's exploits was the theft of the sun in order to provide light for the world. (Page 342) In this case,

In the beginning of time, this world was ruled by evil-doers, and partially illuminated by what resembled pale moonlight. The Sun Carrier tried to change this, but they were unsuccessful. Raven remembered having seen the sun in Ïlquntïn's house above, and resolved to go to obtain it for the benefit of mankind. He flew up aloft to Ïlquntïn's house. He found Ïlquntïn and his daughter, Sïmïïa, and Raven decided that to obtain the sun, it would be necessary for him to become the child of this daughter. Accordingly, he transformed himself into a piece of dust and entered the sun or artificial light in her drinking. She noticed the speck of dust, and lifted it out of the water, and blew it away. Half consciously, Raven changed himself to a hemlock needle, floating on the contents of her cup, but Sïmïïa blew this away before drinking. Once again he changed his form, this time to a cedar, which she swallowed, being unwittingly. Safely within Ïlquntïn's daughter, Raven passed into her womb, and gradually it was apparent that a child was coming. The old man parents were greatly puzzled, because no man had been in the vicinity, but the mere thought was not regarded as disgraceful.

Pregnancy passed with phenomenal speed, and within a few days a sturdy male infant was born. No one had any idea that it was Raven. His mother and grandparents were delighted with the child, and desired that he should have whatever he wished. The boy, According to one old man, Ïlquntïn's wife was called Tsïïsïïa; but recently others, claim Tsïïsïïa, and is not her proper name.

~~(1). Related by Joshua Moody~~ ~~(1). This is described in detail on p. 342.~~

course of two or three weeks the little boy was able to speak and act like a child two or three years of age. Like other precocious children, ~~Raven~~ he was always wanting toys. He used to crawl around on the floor of Nusmät'a and cry if he was not amused, but even the finest toy would keep him happy for only a few minutes. At this time the Sun was hanging from the roof of Nusmät'a, held in a sack-like container through which its light shone feebly. Raven pretended to notice this for the first time and wanted to play with it. Älquntäm refused and tried to pacify his grandson by giving him other toys. But ~~it was no use,~~ the little boy threw everything else on the floor in disgust and almost choked himself crying for the Sun. Älquntäm feared to give it to him in case the container should be broken, but at last he arranged a number of soft objects on the floor and lifted down the Sun so that the child could roll it to and fro like a glowing ball. This pacified Raven, who played with the Sun and was happy. ~~But~~ All the time he was watching ~~him~~ for an opportunity to steal it for the benefit of mankind, and when Someone happened to open the door, he changed himself once more into ~~the form of a~~ Raven and flew out, carrying the Sun with him. As he passed the door-post, he crashed ~~the sun~~ his toy against it, so that the container was broken and the Sun shone forth as it does today. This is how the Sun came to mortals who have since always been grateful to Raven. Älquntäm was very angry but could do nothing.

~~Raven, proud of the power given him by Älquntäm, was constantly pitting himself against his creator. Sometimes, as in the myth just recounted,~~ the result was the acquisition of some valuable object for mankind, but often Raven interfered with the kindly aims of Älquntäm, ~~This~~ a point ~~is~~ illustrated in the following account of the origin of Death:(1)

In the beginning of time, before people had really become human, Raven made a boy from his own body, gave him life, and called him O'miɛtłmai. His creation was Raven's chief joy. Not only was the youth beautiful, ~~for~~ his feet and hands were especially ~~were~~ small and white, ~~but~~ and Raven gloried in what he had done without the assistance of his friend, Yulätimut, the Carpenter. All went well until O'miɛtłmai was about fifteen years of age when

(1) Related by Jim Pollard.

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Ǟquntäm wanted to find out about this being which Raven had created. Accordingly, he sent to earth one of his Snutsᵢlktäls to carry off O'miᵉtᵗmai. At that time there were four Snutsᵢlktäls in Nusmät'a, huge, eagle-like, supernatural birds under the especial care of Ǟquntäm himself. Down swooped one of these creatures and carried the youth aloft to Nusmät'a where he was treated as a guest by Ǟquntäm.

Raven, ignorant of the reason for his loss, was heart-broken.

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resembling eagles, which lived in Nusmath and were the special care of Snai aikila.

Qwax was heart-broken at the loss of Oui ltmai, He pulled out his hair and for four days sat down and pondered about what he would do. Then he decided that he would wage war on Snutz l xtals, not knowing that the latter had been acting on the command of Snai aikila. Qwax went to Yu latimut and told him to make for him a huge whale. The carpenter was somewhat surprised and asked the reason, whereupon Qwax told him of the loss of Oui ltmai, and how he hoped that the Snutz l xtals would be lured into swooping down and fighting the whale and would be vanquished. Yu latimut agreed to help him and with the assistance of Yu sulmu worked for four days on a gigantic cedar, chiselling it out as if it were a canoe, but in the shape of an enormous whale. Then for four days they gathered gum which they secured on the wamm wooden monster whale so that it lay about an inch thick everywhere; and they painted the outer surface to resemble its a whale. It was a very fine piece of work. That night Qwax asked Yu latimut to launch the whale. The stomach had been weighted so that it could not sink and there was place for a man inside to steer it. The whale answered its specifications, diving and rising easily, and moving to right or left according to the wishes of the man inside. Qwax was delighted.

Early next morning Yu latimut again launched the whale at Qwax's request, and it wallowed around near the shore as if it were a real whale. Snai aikila saw it, and despatched one of his Snutz l xtals to fetch it. He chose Nunusmaook, meaning "He who carries One", the Snutz l xtalz able to lift one of anything. Down swooped Nunusmaook, and seized the whale in its talons, but, as it flapped its wings in its efforts to rise, they became stuck in the gum so that it could neither lift its quarry nor escape. and When the whale dived it was kkkkkk drowned. Many people on the shore watched its struggle. Then Snai aikila despatched another of the Snutz l xtalz, Nunus nus k, which means "He who carries Two", and who is able to carry two of anything. Nunus nus k likewise gripped the whale with its claws and succeeded in raising it slightly before its wings got stuck in the gum and it too fell back and was drowned. Then Snai aikila